



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

WASHINGTON, D.C. - 20301

PLEASE NOTE DATE

FOR THE PRESS:

March 2, 1966

NO. 170-66

OXford 5-3176 (Info.)

OXford 7-3189 (Copies)

Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara today made available the attached analysis of erroneous allegations concerning the readiness of U.S. military forces to meet the nation's world-wide commitments:

I. LACK OF READINESS

I. 1. Charge:

Having already committed almost all of our combat-ready units, it would be months before we could commit any more to meet an emergency.

Facts:

Land Forces

We now have 43 maneuver battalions in Vietnam, out of an authorized total active force of 234 (225 of the total will have been activated by June 30, 1966, including 21 newly-authorized since September 1965). Out of the current total of about 1,290,000 Army and Marine Corps personnel, about 170,000, or 15%, are in South Vietnam.

If required, we could deploy from the active force to SEA another 21 battalions between now and June for a total of 64 battalions by that date without call of reserves, generally extending terms of service, or withdrawal of units from Europe or Korea.

In an emergency, with a reserve call-up, extension of terms of service, and extension of tours of duty in Vietnam, we could have ready for deployment from the United States within about 3 months the equivalent of 9 division forces (about 81 battalions) beyond what is deployed today.

The appearance of a "strain" today results from the decision to meet the current requirements for combat forces in Southeast Asia without resorting to the emergency measures (call-up of reserves, widespread involuntary extension of tours of duty, economic controls, etc.) typically relied upon under such circumstances. Such a decision leaves our reserve forces and emergency powers available to meet further contingencies if they should arise.

Tactical Air Forces

We now have about 700 Air Force, Navy and Marine tactical fighter-attack aircraft in Southeast Asia out of a total active force of 2,900, i. e., under 25%.

In an emergency, with a reserve call-up, etc., we could deploy into combat 1500 aircraft in a month, and 2300 in three months, in addition to those now in SEA, Korea, and Europe.

I.2. Charge:

As a result of our Southeast Asian operations, we have almost no resources left with which we could make a graduated response to any serious challenge.

Facts:

The United States has a far stronger military posture now than at any time since World War II, and our capability for graduated response has never been greater. Within the present rules of no call-up of reserves, a one-year tour in Vietnam, without generally extending terms of service, and with no controls on the economy, we have deployed or authorized for deployment over 230,000 men to South Vietnam, and approximately 66,000 elsewhere in Southeast Asia including offshore naval personnel directly supporting SVN operations (296,000 total); this is about 10 percent of our total active duty military personnel. We are fully capable of substantially expanding the SVN deployments above the level of forces deployed during the Korean War, if required, and without calling reserves, without generally extending terms of service, without extending tours of duty in Vietnam, without imposing direct economic controls, and while maintaining our six division equivalents and associated tactical air support in Europe. No other nation in history could have deployed so many forces so fast so far with so little strain as has the United States.

In the event we face other contingencies, we can draw on the balance of the three million man active forces; mobilize the 1.9 million man ready reserve force; and extend terms of service, adding about 2,000 trained personnel per day. Our production of bombs and munitions, aircraft, vehicles, and arms of all kinds is being brought to wartime rates able to sustain far greater forces than presently deployed. The ports and facilities in Southeast Asia are being expanded so that we are better able to react against any possible enemy action in the Pacific.

Therefore, it is clear that we have a great reservoir of resources for making a graduated response to any serious challenge.

I.4. Charge:

The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) was not ready for combat when it was sent to Southeast Asia.

Facts:

The 1st Cavalry Division had completed all of the essential training prescribed by the Army for units deploying overseas before being sent overseas, and 97% of its personnel had completed all required individual training. It conducted its first defensive operation only ten days after completing its arrival in South Vietnam and fought very well in its first offensive operation only three weeks after arrival. While this entirely new type of division, born of an experiment carried out in 1963 and 1964 and representing one of the major advances in tactical concepts introduced in recent years, could have spent more time refining these concepts before deploying, the division was clearly ready for combat when deployed.

I.5. Charge:

The Air National Guard has had to make up for the inadequacy of the Military Airlift Command in meeting the requirements for airlift to Southeast Asia.

Facts:

Our airlift capability to Southeast Asia will have just about tripled between June 1961 and June 1966, and, on the basis of the program planned for the FY 1966-71 period it will increase more than ten-fold by FY 1972 as compared with FY 1961.

Air National Guard and Air Reserve aircraft and pilots have always participated in domestic and overseas airlift operations in accomplishing their normal training flying. All such participation is strictly voluntary. During 1965, these forces supplied about 4% of Military Airlift Command (MAC) airlift to Southeast Asia, a valuable, but relatively small addition to the over-all capability.

I.6. Charge:

Army Reserve Components are in the lowest state of readiness that they have been in the last decade because of changes and reorganizations in the Reserve components within the last few years.

Facts:

The statement that the Army Reserve and Guard Components are at the lowest state of readiness in a decade is untrue. The Army Selected Reserve Force is at a higher state of readiness than any Reserve Force in the history of the Reserve Components.

Over the course of the past several years, action has been taken to bring the Reserve and Guard Component structure in line with the requirements of our Contingency Plans. In 1963, about 1,800 obsolete and unnecessary company and detachment size units consisting of 144,000 personnel were eliminated; included in the units eliminated were 8 low priority divisions. The trained personnel in those units were used to form about 1,000 new units of the type required by Contingency Plans; 8 high priority brigades were thus added to the structure and the manning level of the active Army round out units and the 6 divisions forces were raised from about 70% to 80%.

Last December, we inactivated 751 low priority units in the Army Reserve consisting of six 55% strength divisions and 222 other units -- none of which were required by Contingency Plans. Of the 55,000 personnel in these units, 25,000 were reassigned to high priority units of the Army Reserve and the National Guard including the units of the Selected Reserve Force. This reduced by the same amount the number of personnel who would otherwise have had to be drawn from civilian life and sent through the Reserve Enlistment Training Program. Substantially all the remainder were assigned to the Ready Reserve Mobilization Pool. We also added to the structure some 41 new type support units with a strength of about 5,000 men which are required to support the active Army.

While the realignment has of course led to unit reorganization, changes such as these are essential if we are to keep the Reserve and Guard Components structure in line with the requirements of current Contingency Plans and compatible with a modern active Army.

I.7. Charge:

In the State of New York, there is not a single unit of the Selected Reserve Force which is ready for training.

Facts:

The charge is incorrect. The New York Selected Reserve Force has been undergoing intensive training for several weeks. The New York National Guard has one Field Artillery Group, 2 Field Artillery Battalions, and one Ordnance Battalion in the SRF. As of January 31st, the total strength of these units was 98% of authorized strength, which is considered excellent.

Satisfactory progress towards meeting the objectives of the SRF has been achieved: i. e., to be able to respond to a seven-day alert and to complete battalion level testing during annual field training. The units have priority for personnel and sufficient equipment and supplies for training, and are completing the pre-mobilization administrative actions.

II. PERSONNEL SHORTAGES

II. 1. Charge:

There is a shortage of Army majors and lieutenant colonels which can be corrected only by calling up individual reservists.

Facts:

There is not now and there is no prospect of a shortage in the Army of majors and lieutenant colonels. As of 31 December 1965, the Army had 30 over its authorization of 17,500 majors and only six less than the authorized 12,650 lieutenant colonels.



**II. 2. Charge:**

Our training facilities are so overloaded that we will not be able to activate the new 5th Marine Division until this summer.

**Facts:**

The activation of the 5th Marine Division is proceeding according to the original plan. It will be activated in increments over the period of about one year. The first regiment of this Division was activated on schedule on March 1, 1966, the second regiment will begin forming in November 1966, and the third regiment in January 1967. The entire Division is scheduled to be organized, trained, equipped and combat ready by May 1, 1967.

II. 3. Charge:

The combat readiness of the ships in the Atlantic Fleet has been degraded as a result of having had their crews stripped to fill the combat requirements of the Pacific Fleet.

Facts:

On September 1, 1965, there was a drawdown of about 4,500 personnel (less than 4% of the total in the Atlantic Fleet), few of whom were critical leaders or held critical ratings. Since that time, the situation has improved, and the Atlantic Fleet is essentially manned now at the same strength as on July 1, 1965, prior to any drawdowns.

II. 3. Charge:

The combat readiness of the ships in the Atlantic Fleet has been degraded as a result of having had their crews stripped to fill the combat requirements of the Pacific Fleet.

Facts:

On September 1, 1965, there was a drawdown of about 4,500 personnel (less than 4% of the total in the Atlantic Fleet), few of whom were critical leaders or held critical ratings. Since that time, the situation has improved, and the Atlantic Fleet is essentially manned now at the same strength as on July 1, 1965, prior to any drawdowns.

II.4. Charge:

The Navy's personnel problems will become worse after June 30, 1966 when the authorization for extending enlistments expires.

Facts:

This charge is untrue. Increased recruitment, training, and promotion will enable the Navy to meet its currently foreseen needs for personnel by August 1966. The Navy presently does not believe that it will have to extend enlistments beyond that date, but it does have the authority to do so if the need develops. This authority was granted to the Secretary of the Navy in time of emergency under Title 10, U.S. Code, Section 5538.

II. 5. Charge:

It has been necessary to take pilots away from the Strategic Air Command's force of B-47 bombers in order to provide replacements for the pilots flying F-105's in Southeast Asia.

Facts:

The phase-out of B-47 bombers and the need for retraining B-47 pilots has nothing to do with Southeast Asia. The phase-out began in the late 1950's and has proceeded according to the plan established at that time. It will be complete by June 1966. The B-47's have been replaced by B-52's, B-58's, Minuteman and Titan ICBM's and Polaris. The net effect has been more than a threefold increase (836 to about 2,600) in alert strategic nuclear weapons from June 1961 to June 1966.

The majority of the 950 pilots released from the Strategic Air Command were assigned to airlift forces which have been expanded threefold in tonnage capacity over the same period. Eighty-three pilots have been assigned to duty in tactical fighters, all of whom will receive fighter training prior to their assignment to combat units. Most of them have had previous fighter experience.

II.6.

Charge:

There were 55,000 Reservists in the six tactical Reserve divisions that were disestablished by the Pentagon. Whereas the Pentagon counted on 8,000 of these volunteering for the National Guard, less than 350 actually have.

Facts:

The statement is not correct. We estimated that 20,000 of the 55,000 in deactivated units would transfer to other Reserve units, of which 2,900 would be in the Selected Reserve Force. In fact, these estimates have been exceeded. By 31 December 1965, 24,400 Reservists from deactivated units had joined other Reserve units, including 3,600 who joined units of the Selected Reserve Force.

**II.7. Charge:**

The units supplying and supporting the Seventh Army in Germany are weaker than they have been at any time since before the 1961 Berlin crisis.

**Facts:**

The total strength of United States Army Europe is today almost identical to what it was in 1961 before the Berlin crisis. The strength of the support units organic to the 7th Army has been increased since that time while at the same time the strength of the non-organic support has been decreased. The decrease is offset to a significant degree by reorganization of supply and support units to provide greater efficiency and by the far greater capability to deploy men quickly from CONUS. Finally, the support to combat ratio of the U. S. Army in Europe is higher than that of any other Army in Europe.

### III. EQUIPMENT SHORTAGES

#### III. 1. Charge:

The procurement of essential items such as ammunition and spare parts has been so inadequate in the recent past that the Services have had to draw down the inventories they accumulated earlier.

#### Facts:

This charge is based on a misconception of the purposes for which inventories are built up in the first place.

In computing the desired inventory levels, allowance is made for the war reserve stocks needed to support the forces in combat until replenishment from new production becomes available. Thus, it is anticipated that the inventories will be drawn down during the period that production is being increased to the new combat consumption levels. The test of the adequacy of the peacetime inventory levels is their ability to support the forces in combat. It is generally agreed by all competent observers that no shortages of any type have impeded combat operations in Vietnam. This fact has been attested to by General Westmoreland, our Commander in South Vietnam, Admiral Sharp, our Commander in the Pacific, General McConnell, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and by General Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Johnson, Chief of Staff of the Army, and General Greene, Commandant of the Marine Corps, all three of whom recently visited Vietnam and talked with commanders down to the battalion level.

With regard to procurement in the recent past, contract awards for essential end items were substantially greater than in prior years. For example, contract awards for ammunition during the four fiscal years 1962-1965 were double the total of the preceding four years; awards for weapons were over 40% higher; and awards for tanks and automotive vehicles were nearly 100% higher.



III. 2. Charge:

The depletion of our inventories would not have been so serious if the Services' requests for reopening production lines of aircraft and other items had not been denied.

Facts:

The only request to reopen a production line that has been denied was a Navy proposal to resume production of the propeller-driven A-1 attack aircraft. Instead, additional procurement of modern jet aircraft was authorized. No other requests to reopen production lines have been denied.

III. 4. Charge:

Rates of consumption in Southeast Asia are considerably higher than expected, and many items are in such short supply that they are being issued on an "as available" basis.

Facts:

Rates of consumption of munitions are generally equal to or lower than expected and planned for, and no shortages have impeded our combat operations in Southeast Asia or affected the morale or welfare of our men. This fact has been attested to by General Westmoreland, our Commander in South Vietnam, Admiral Sharp, our Commander in the Pacific, General McConnell, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and by General Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Johnson, Chief of Staff of the Army, and General Greene, Commandant of the Marine Corps, all three of whom recently visited Vietnam and talked with commanders down to the battalion level.

This is not to say that every one of the tens of thousands of Defense Department supply points is without a single "inventory shortage." Anyone who has had experience with large supply systems knows that somewhere, sometime, something will be lacking. No matter how much we spend for defense, someone, somewhere will be short some item at any particular time. This has nothing to do with the amount of funds requested and appropriated. It simply reflects the fact that no system involving literally hundreds of thousands of people and millions of different items and operating around the globe can be one hundred percent perfect.

Mistakes in distribution or requirements calculations will be made, and these mistakes will be reflected in an inventory shortage, or overage, somewhere in the system. This is true of private industry as well as government, and it is up to management at all levels to see to it that these mistakes are held to a minimum and corrected promptly when discovered.

There are a few items being issued on an as available basis, but these are generally new items which are currently being procured on an expedited basis.

Accordingly, the entire question of shortages must be viewed in perspective. The acid test of our logistics system is the ability of our forces to take the field and engage in combat, and that ability has been demonstrated in full measure during the last six months.

III.5. Charge:

Spare parts of every type for aircraft and other equipment are in short supply everywhere.

Facts:

This sweeping allegation is incorrect and gives a misleading impression. From time to time, because of maldistribution, unanticipated usage or multiplicity of models in commercial type equipment, temporary shortages do develop. This is particularly true in certain locations where conditions of usage are especially severe. These are being overcome by (1) expedited delivery of parts from stock, (2) increased procurement, and (3) standardization of equipment by location.

III.6. Charge:

Navy destroyers often wait months for spare parts.

Facts.

Critical spare parts for Navy destroyers are generally delivered in less than 20 days. Although there are individual cases where the delivery of spare parts has taken longer, it is misleading to imply that the effectiveness of our destroyers has been materially affected by long waits for critical spare parts.

III. 7. Charge:

The Military Airlift Command cannot maintain the past year's accelerated rate of flying.

Facts:

The total tonnage transported by the Military Airlift Command has increased each month for the past year, and MAC has consistently equaled or exceeded its planned rate of activity. The tonnage per month will increase by another 20% during the first half of CY 66. The number of hours per day flown by C-130's and C-135's in MAC will increase from 5 in CY 65 to 6.5 by early 1966 and 8 by the end of 1966. Although the C-141 is just now being introduced, its flying hour rate will also increase to 8 hrs/day early next year. The higher rates can be maintained indefinitely if required.

**III. 8. Charge:**

The Army has an insufficient number of sandbags, barbed wire and field fortification equipment in Vietnam and of generators, batteries, tires for jeeps, trucks and aircraft, engineer and materials handling equipment.

**Fact:**

There is today no significant problem in Vietnam with respect to barbed wire, sandbags, and other field fortification material. The Army has no shortages of tires for jeeps, trucks and aircraft. There are some shortages of particular types of generators, batteries, and engineer and materials handling equipment; these are not significantly affecting combat operations in Vietnam, and are being eliminated by normal and where needed accelerated procurement.

**III.9. Charge:**

We are losing aircraft almost as fast as we are producing them, and any increase in Southeast Asian losses would make the situation much worse.

**Facts:**

In the FY 1962-1965 period, we provided more than 2600 new tactical fighter and attack aircraft. As the tempo of activities in Southeast Asia has increased, we have taken steps to increase our deliveries of new tactical fighter and attack aircraft to almost 100 per month. This will be adequate to cope with our current loss rate of 29 aircraft per month, to provide for a possible increase in losses, and to augment and modernize our tactical aircraft forces.

#### IV. 1. Management Deficiencies

##### Charge:

Although the war was expanding, Services were forced to finance the war out of their regular budgets until just last year. It was not until January of this year that an adequate appropriation was belatedly requested.

##### Facts:

The FY 1966 Budget was submitted to the Congress in January 1965, whereas the level of activity in SEA did not start to increase substantially until February 1965. As soon as the increase started, estimates were made of the additional requirements and a Supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$700 million for FY 65 was submitted in May.

In August, a request for \$1.7 billion was submitted as an Amendment to the FY 1966 Budget which had not then been acted on by the Congress. The funds included in the Amendment were the amounts needed to expand production rates, to buy tooling and long lead-time components, and to expand construction. In presenting this Supplement to the Congress Secretary McNamara explained that it was not the total cost, and that other requirements would be submitted when more carefully prepared estimates were worked out. This was done in the FY 1966 Supplemental for \$12.3 billion, and the regular FY 1967 Budget, both of which were submitted to the Congress in January 1966.

While we want to ensure that we have adequate funds to provide weapons and supplies for our forces in Vietnam, we also wish to benefit from the lessons learned during the Korean War. Funds requested and appropriated were considerably greater than was actually required and, as a result, much of the effective control exercised by the Congress and the top Defense managers over the Department of Defense was lost. One result was the buildup by the end of the conflict of huge excess stocks, which later were sold at a few cents on the dollar.